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United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

BOYS' DEMONSTRATION WORK: THE CORN CLUBS.

ORGANIZATION AND INSTRUCTION.

The Boys' Corn Clubs of the United States Department of Agriculture were organized for the following purposes:

(1) To afford the rural teacher a simple and easy method of teaching practical agriculture in the school in the way it must be acquired to be of any real service, mainly by actual work upon the farm.

Corn was selected for demonstration because it is a plant that can be profitably produced in all parts of the United States. Further, the boys have a common knowledge of it and the lessons seem easy. Corn yields more food to the acre than any other grain crop, and a good crop stands for cheaper food for men and animals.

(2) To prove that there is more in the soil than the farmer has ever gotten out of it; to inspire boys with a love of the land by showing them how they can get wealth out of it by tilling it in a better way and thus be helpful to the family and the neighborhood.

(3) To give the boys a definite, worthy purpose and to stimulate a friendly rivalry among them.

Such are the objects of the Boys' Corn Clubs in the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work. In order to obtain the best results it is not only necessary to get the boys to unite their efforts, but it is also essential that other vital forces in the county cooperate. One of the strong features about the demonstration work is that it is cooperative. So in the boys' department it is frequently found that the county superintendents of education and teachers, the demonstration agents, the business men, the newspapers, and the parents give valuable aid and support.

Where this work is being introduced in a county the superintendent of education and teachers can reach the boys in all sections of the county more quickly and effectively than any other agency. The

superintendent can explain the plan to the teachers, and they can explain it to the boys and secure the names of all boys who will agree to plant 1 acre of corn. Corn is a fine subject for study.

After this is done a meeting of all boys interested should be held at the courthouse or some central place for the purpose of organization and instruction. (Fig. 1.) Such meeting should be held as early in the season as possible, so that every boy may have time for proper preparation of soil and selection of seed. For the first year it has been found advantageous to see that first-class seed be furnished to all of the boys alike. Boards of trade, chambers of commerce, bankers, and business men have been very liberal in providing funds for purchasing seed corn. After the first year each boy should select his own



FIG. 1.—Typical organization meeting of Boys' Corn Club.

seed. Wherever a special agent of the United States Department of Agriculture is located in a county it will be found that he will gladly help in giving instructions and advice in regard to the agricultural part of the work, either to the county club or to local groups of boys whom he may meet in his rounds over the county.

PRIZES AND PREMIUMS.

If the merchants and other public-spirited citizens have been visited and the work explained to them before the general meeting of boys, there will be a fine list of prizes to announce. There have been many commendable contributions to this cause in various parts of the country during the past year. It adds considerable interest to the

work to offer prizes like the following, which have been selected from different lists in the South for 1910: A trip to Washington; \$50 in gold; \$25; \$10; \$5; a nice buggy; a first-class bicycle; a strong two-horse plow; a double-barreled shotgun; a gold watch; a \$5 hat; a \$15 suit of clothes; an up-to-date corn planter; a ton of fertilizer, a two-horse wagon; a pair of registered pigs; a pair of full-blooded chickens; a fine colt; a registered calf; books on agriculture and horticulture; also other articles of utility and value. (Fig. 2.) Some boards of trade and chambers of commerce have made appropriations direct for prizes, and some have given fine recognition to the efforts of



FIG. 2.—State prize winners of Boys' Corn Clubs at Washington, D. C., 1910.

the boys' clubs by giving them banquets and street car and automobile rides. The clubs have also been honored by being invited to march or appear in parades and on other occasions.

CIRCULARS AND BULLETINS.

Just as soon as the names and addresses of all the boys are assembled in the county, duplicate lists should be sent to Dr. S. A. Knapp, Washington, D. C., who has charge of the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work. The lists should be in alphabetical order and contain only the names of boys who will carry out the plan. The name of the superintendent or manager should be put at the top of the list. These boys will from time to time receive circulars of

instruction and information in regard to seed selection, preparation, fertilization, cultivation, etc. (Fig. 3.) These circulars furnish excellent subject matter for discussion at a club meeting or for a lesson in school. They also lead to further study of Farmers' Bulletins and books. A boy will profit from such lessons, discussions, and books, because he is making practical application of the principles taught. He learns scientific agriculture because he needs it and not because it is scientific. (Fig. 4.)



FIG. 3.—Field meeting of Boys' Corn Club.

RULES AND AWARDS.

It is not necessary to have many rules. A few regulations, however, are necessary in order to prevent misunderstandings. It is well for the boys to elect their president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. These officers, with one or two additions, may constitute the executive committee. Some clubs have badges of membership in the shape of a button with the name of the club, name of the county and State, and the year printed or engraved upon it.

The following rules may be adopted by a club, with such modifications and additions as may be found necessary:

- (1) Boys joining clubs and entering contests must be between 10 and 18 years of age on January 1, of any given year.
- (2) No boy shall contest for a prize unless he becomes a member of a club.

(3) The members of the clubs must agree to study the instructions of the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work.

(4) Each boy must plan his own crop and do his own work. A small boy may hire help for heavy plowing in preparing the soil.

(5) Exhibits must be delivered to the county superintendent of education on or before November 1.

(6) The land and corn must be carefully measured in the presence of at least two disinterested witnesses, who shall attest the certificate of the boy.

(7) Gather the corn and weigh it. Weigh two 100-pound lots from different parts of the total. Shuck and shell each lot and then weigh the shelled corn



FIG. 4.—Corn club boy showing root development of corn.

in each instance in order to find the average percentage of shelled corn. Multiply the total weight by this per cent and divide by 56 to get the number of bushels.

(8) In awarding prizes the following basis shall be used:

	Per cent.
a. Greatest yield per acre-----	30
b. Best exhibit of ten ears-----	20
c. Best written account showing history of crop-----	20
d. Best showing of profit on investment based on the commercial price of corn-----	30

It is a good plan to have *a* and *b* judged by a committee of farm experts and *c* and *d* by a committee of school officers and teachers. Their combined judgment can be made very helpful.

In estimating profits uniform prices should be used; for instance, \$5 per acre for rent of average land, 10 cents per hour for the work of each boy, 5 cents per hour for each horse, \$2 for a 2-horse load of stable manure, and market prices for commercial fertilizers.

FAIRS AND EXHIBITS.

Where there is a county fair the boys' exhibits should be shown there. If no fair is held in a county, the boys' exhibits should be collected in the courthouse or some other public place easy of access. (Fig. 5.)



FIG. 5.—Typical exhibit of Boys' Corn Club.

A good exhibit by a boys' club may lead to the establishment of a county fair. Exhibits by local clubs at schoolhouses stimulate the work and give fine opportunities for general instruction. Although the clubs may start with corn, the development naturally leads to exhibits of other farm and garden crops.

RESULTS.

The object of the boys' demonstration work is the same as that among men, viz, to secure the adoption of better methods of farming and greater yields at less cost. Many of the boys in the clubs who begin to study agriculture in this way will continue the study in the

agricultural colleges; others will continue such efforts on their farms, and all of them will make more useful and more efficient citizens. From the pleasant and profitable experience of owning and managing their small plats they will develop into independent, intelligent farmers. The country needs a citizenship, and such a life offers, and will offer, great opportunities for some years. The professions are crowded, and the wage earners must pay high prices for the necessities of life. The wise and judicious producer can enjoy health, wealth, and contentment. Success in this work is good training for usefulness in any line. The question is, How many boys can be reached and influenced thus to succeed?

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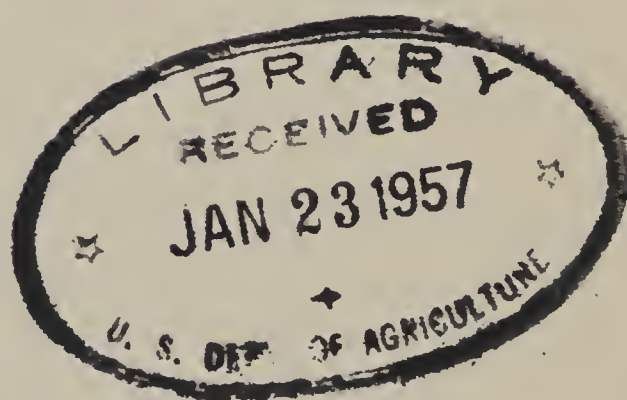
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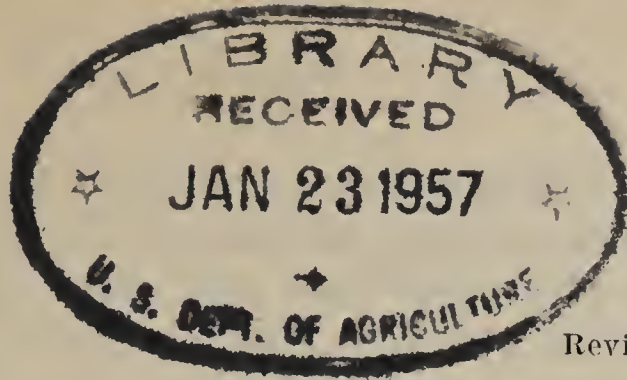
Approved:

WM. A. TAYLOR,
Acting Chief of Bureau.

JANUARY 13, 1911.







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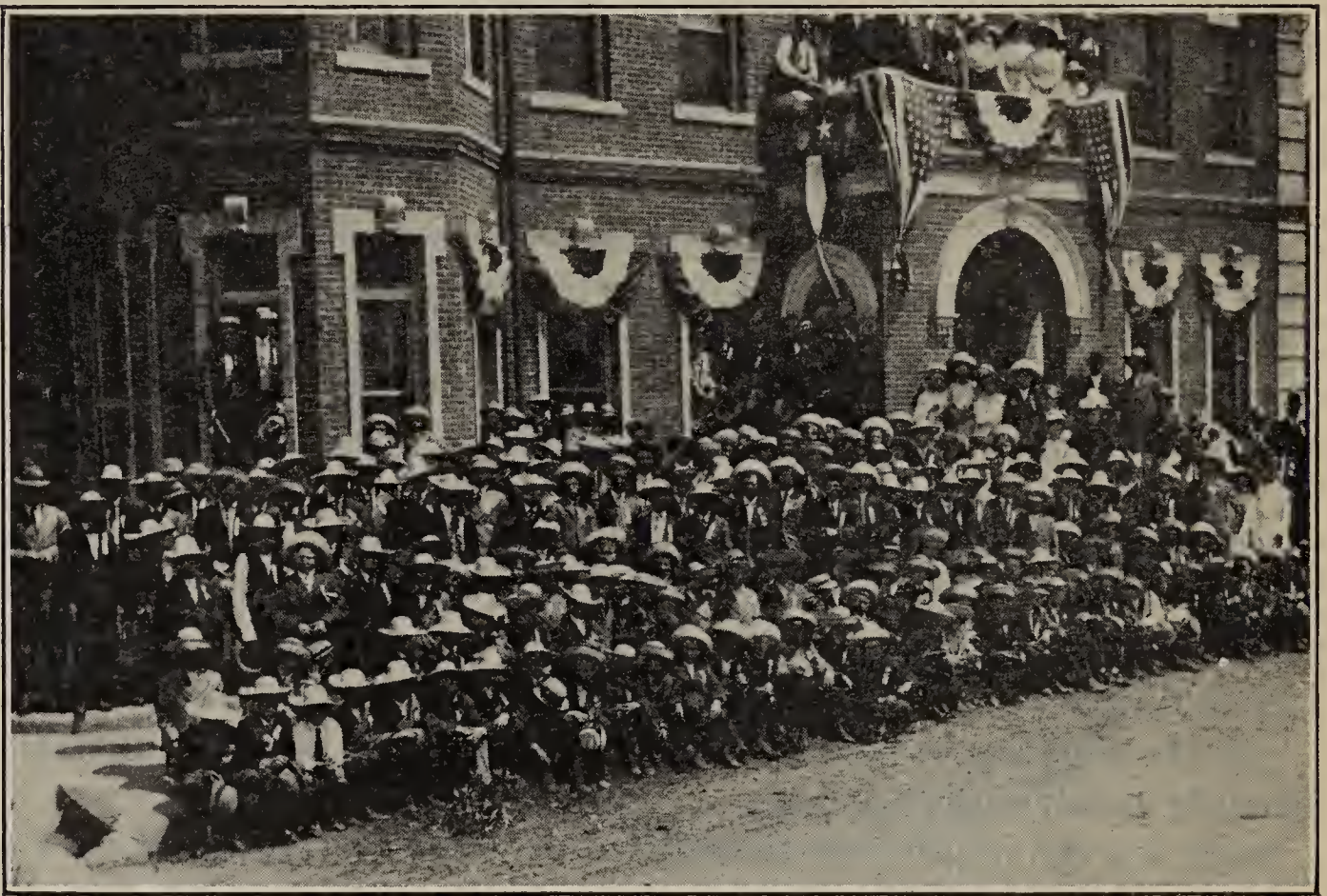


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(7) The entire crop of corn should be weighed when it is in a dry condition. Two 100-pound lots should be weighed from different parts of the total. Weigh the shelled corn from these two lots in order to find the average percentage of shelled corn. Multiply the total weight by this percentage and divide by 56 in order to get the total number of bushels. In cases of large yields the moisture content should be ascertained. Doubtless the agricultural colleges will be glad to make such tests. If not, apply to this Office and it will be arranged with the proper office of the Department of Agriculture.



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FEBRUARY 21, 1912.



